

What is claimed is:

1. A method of operating a flashlight comprising the steps of:  
providing a momentary contact on a body of the flashlight for activating a light source of the flashlight and for selection of any of a plurality of different operating modes; and  
detecting entry of an input code through the momentary contact where said input code identifies one of the plurality of operating modes; and  
operating the light source in accordance with the identified mode.
2. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 1 wherein one of the plurality of operating modes further comprises an on/off mode.
3. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 2 further comprising activating the momentary contact once to continuously activate the light source of the flashlight in the on/off mode.
4. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 1 wherein one of the plurality of operating modes further comprises a flashing mode.
5. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 4 further comprising activating the momentary contact continuously for a predetermined time period to select the flashing mode.
6. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 5 wherein the continuous activation of the momentary contact for selecting the flashing mode further comprises 5 seconds.
7. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 5 further comprising activating the momentary contact for less than the predetermined time period to activate and deactivate the flashlight in the flashing mode.

8. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 5 further comprising exiting the flashing mode by activating the momentary contact a second time for the predetermined time period.
9. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 8 wherein the step of exiting the flashing mode further comprises returning to an on/off mode.
10. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 1 wherein one of the plurality of operating modes further comprises an SOS mode.
11. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 10 further comprising activating the momentary contact a plurality of times in rapid succession to select the SOS mode.
12. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 11 wherein the step of activating the momentary contact a plurality of times in rapid succession to select the SOS mode further comprises activating the momentary contact three times wherein each activation is no more than one-half second apart.
13. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 12 wherein the step of activating the momentary contact three times to select the SOS mode further comprises exiting the SOS mode by activating the momentary contact a fourth time.
14. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 13 wherein the step of exiting the SOS mode further comprises returning to an on/off mode.
15. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 10 wherein the SOS mode further comprises generating a morse code light signal for the letters SOS.
16. A flashlight comprising:  
a momentary contact provided on a body of the flashlight for activating a light source of the flashlight and for selection of any of a plurality of different operating modes; and

means for detecting entry of an input code through the momentary contact where said input code identifies one of the plurality of operating modes; and  
means for operating the light source in accordance with the identified mode.

17. The flashlight as in claim 16 wherein one of the plurality of operating modes further comprises an on/off mode.

18. The flashlight as in claim 17 wherein the input code for the on/off mode further comprises activating the momentary contact once to continuously activate the light source of the flashlight in the on/off mode.

19. The flashlight as in claim 16 wherein one of the plurality of operating modes further comprises a flashing mode.

20. The flashlight as in claim 19 wherein the input code for the flashing mode further comprises means for detecting activation of the momentary contact continuously for a predetermined time period to select the flashing mode.

21. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 20 wherein the predetermined time period further comprises 5 seconds.

22. The flashlight as in claim 20 further comprising means for detecting activation of the momentary contact for less than the predetermined time period to activate and deactivate the flashlight in the flashing mode.

23. The flashlight as in claim 20 further comprising means for exiting the flashing mode by activating the momentary contact a second time for the predetermined time period.

24. The flashlight as in claim 16 wherein one of the plurality of operating modes further comprises an SOS mode.

25. The flashlight as in claim 24 wherein the input code for the SOS mode further comprises means for detecting activation of the momentary contact a plurality of times in rapid succession to select the SOS mode.
26. The flashlight as in claim 25 wherein the input code for the SOS further comprises means for detecting activation of the momentary contact three times wherein each activation is no more than one-half second apart.
27. The flashlight as in claim 26 wherein the means for detecting entry of an input code further comprises means for exiting the SOS mode by activating the momentary contact a fourth time.
30. The flashlight as in claim 24 wherein the SOS mode further comprises means for generating a morse code light signal for the letters SOS.
31. A flashlight comprising:  
a momentary contact provided on a body of the flashlight for activating a light source of the flashlight and for selection of any of a plurality of different operating modes; and  
a mode selection program adapted to detect entry of an input code through the momentary contact where said input code identifies one of the plurality of operating modes; and  
a plurality of mode programs adapted to operate the light source in accordance with the identified mode.
34. The flashlight as in claim 31 wherein one of the plurality of operating modes further comprises a flashing mode.
35. The flashlight as in claim 34 wherein the input code for the flashing mode further comprises a timer subroutine adapted to detect activation of the momentary contact continuously for a predetermined time period to select the flashing mode.

36. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 35 wherein the predetermined time period further comprises 5 seconds.
37. The flashlight as in claim 34 further comprising means for detecting activation of the momentary contact for less than the predetermined time period to activate and deactivate the flashlight in the flashing mode.
38. The flashlight as in claim 35 further comprising a flashing mode exit subroutine adapted to exit the flashing mode when the momentary contact is activated a second time for the predetermined time period.
39. The flashlight as in claim 31 wherein one of the plurality of operating modes further comprises an SOS mode.
40. The flashlight as in claim 39 wherein the input code for the SOS mode further comprising a counter subroutine adapted to detect activation of the momentary contact a plurality of times in rapid succession to select the SOS mode.
41. The flashlight as in claim 40 wherein the counter subroutine for detecting the input code for the SOS further comprises a timer subroutine adapted to reject any input codes where any activation is more than one-half second apart.
42. The flashlight as in claim 41 wherein the means for detecting entry of an input code further comprises a flashing mode exit subroutine adapted to exit the SOS mode when the momentary contact is activated a fourth time.
43. The flashlight as in claim 39 wherein the SOS mode further comprises a SOS program adapted to generate a morse code light signal for the letters SOS.
44. A method of operating a flashlight comprising the step of:

providing a momentary contact on a body of the flashlight for activating the flashlight and for selection of a plurality of operating modes; and

detecting entry of an input code through the momentary contact for selecting an operating mode of the plurality of operating modes.

45. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 44 wherein one of the plurality of operating modes further comprises an on/off mode.

46. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 45 further comprising activating the momentary contact once to continuously activate a light source of the flashlight in the on/off mode.

47. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 45 wherein one of the plurality of operating modes further comprises a flashing mode.

48. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 47 further comprising activating the momentary contact continuously for a predetermined time period to select the flashing mode.

49. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 48 wherein the continuous activation of the momentary contact for selecting the flashing mode further comprises 5 seconds.

50. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 48 further comprising activating the momentary contact for less than the predetermined time period to activate and deactivate the flashlight in the flashing mode.

51. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 48 further comprising exiting the flashing mode by activating the momentary contact a second time for the predetermined time period.

52. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 51 wherein the step of exiting the flashing mode further comprises returning to an on/off mode.

53. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 44 wherein one of the plurality of operating modes further comprises an SOS mode.
54. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 53 further comprising activating the momentary contact a plurality of times in rapid succession to select the SOS mode.
55. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 54 wherein the step of activating the momentary contact a plurality of times in rapid succession to select the SOS mode further comprises activating the momentary contact three times wherein each activation is no more than one-half second apart.
56. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 55 wherein the step of activating the momentary contact three times to select the SOS mode further comprises exiting the SOS mode by activating the momentary contact a fourth time.
57. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 56 wherein the step of exiting the SOS mode further comprises returning to an on/off mode.
58. The method of operating the flashlight as in claim 53 wherein the SOS mode further comprises generating a morse code light signal for the letters SOS.